

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE	
S. B. REGISTRY	
No. S. B. D.	7596
Date	25 7 38

Morning Leader (Comment): 20th 1938 (AM)

PETER PREVOT. AN ENEMY OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE

Peter Prevot, a British subject, was arrested by the Chinese authorities in Hankow on July 5 on suspicion of being a spy. It has now been definitely ascertained that he was a spy in the employ of the Japanese. His activities will not affect the diplomatic relations between China and Great Britain. Peter Prevot is now an enemy of the Chinese people.

There is no doubt that Peter Prevot's object in working as a spy for the Japanese was to make money. It should not be overlooked that China is now carrying on a war of resistance not only for the sake of her own existence and the peace of the Far East but for the assurance of international peace as well. The authorities of the foreign Powers in China should impress this upon the minds of their nationals. They should check the movements of their nationals and assist China by removing such persons from the employ of Japanese.

FILE

## Spy Suspect Pleads Guilty In Hankow

**Prevot Accepts Charges  
But Denies Harboring  
Anti-Chinese Motive**

HANKOW, July 20.—(Reuters).—The case against Mr. Peter Prevot, British subject who was last month detained by the Chinese authorities for alleged espionage activities, was heard in the British Consular Court here this morning.

Mr. Prevot, who was born in Hongkong, was detained in Wuchang on June 28 while boarding a plane for Hongkong.

On hearing of Mr. Prevot's arrest, Mr. C. E. Whitmore, British Consul-General in Hankow, requested that he be handed over to him, and this request was immediately complied with.

**Pleads Guilty.**  
Mr. Prevot pleaded guilty at this morning's hearing to infringement of Article 89 of the China Order-in-Council of 1925, which states:—

"Where it is proved that there is reasonable ground to apprehend that the acts or conduct of a British subject are likely to produce or excite a breach of public peace, the Court may require him to give security to keep the peace or for his future good behavior."

In pleading guilty to the charge, Mr. Prevot's counsel, Mr. C. E. Sherwin, said that the defendant wished to state that while his methods of gathering information might well cause the Chinese to become suspicious, he did not intend to use such information to the detriment of China.

The Court ordered Mr. Prevot to furnish security of \$5,000 on two sureties, both British subjects resident in Hankow.

*Handwritten:* D.S. Prevot  
21/7

## Local Briton Ordered Deported For Spying

(Reuter's Agency)

HANKOW, July 21.—Mr. Peter Prevot, who yesterday pleaded guilty to infringement of Article 89 of the China Order-in-Council of 1925 and was ordered to furnish security of \$5000 in two sureties, again appeared before the British Consular Court today.

Through his counsel Mr. C. E. Sherwin, Mr. Prevot said he was unable to secure the necessary sureties totalling \$5000.

The acting consul-general, Mr. C. E. Whitmore, who is also judge of the court, thereupon ordered that Mr. Prevot be deported from China.

This order is subjected to confirmation by the judge of H.B.M. Supreme Court in Shanghai.

Mr. Prevot was last month detained by the Chinese authorities for alleged espionage activities, and was subsequently handed over to the British authorities.

In pleading guilty to infringement of Article 89 of the China Order-in-Council of 1925 yesterday, Mr. Prevot's counsel said

that the defendant wished to say that while his methods of gathering information might well cause the Chinese to become suspicious, he did not intend to use such information to the detriment of China.

Article 89 of the China Order-in-Council reads:

"Where it is proved that there is reasonable ground to apprehend that the acts or conduct of a British subject are likely to produce or excite a breach of public peace, the court may require him to give security to keep the peace or for his future good behavior."

### Well-Known Here

Mr. Prevot is well-known in Shanghai, having lived in this city many years. He is a member of the local stock exchange, and for some time was manager of the Ste. Anne Building on Rue du Consulat. He is a Briton born in Hongkong, and is unmarried. During the World War, he was in France with the Chinese Labor Corps.

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**SECRET**  
SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
File No. B. D. 7596  
REGISTRY

S.1, Special Branch

REPORT

Date July 15, 1938.

Subject P.H. PREVOT - espionage activities in Hankow.

Made by D.S. Pitts

Forwarded by

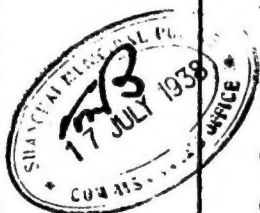
C. G. G. G. D. D.

With reference to the attached articles relating to the alleged espionage activities in Hankow of P.H. Prevot, British, and his detention by the Chinese authorities on June 28 and subsequent handing over to the British Consular officials, I have to report the following :-

Prevot has been making numerous trips to Hankow during the past few months on behalf of the Japanese and has been heard locally to boast on several occasions of the fact that he has been working for the Nipponese Military in return for a monthly salary of \$1,000.00.

It is said that he is utilizing his knowledge of local and China conditions on behalf of a syndicate of foreigners in the employ of the Japanese.

On June 7, 1938, Prevot left Shanghai for Hongkong in the m.v. "Aramis," en route to Hankow. In the latter city Prevot became the subject of an intensive surveillance on the part of the Chinese authorities. On June 27, the Mayor of Hankow communicated with the Acting British Consul-General there and complained that Prevot was acting as a spy for the Japanese. He requested that the British authorities immediately curb Prevot's activities and thus avoid any unpleasantness involving neutrals during the present tense situation. Prevot was called the same day - June 27 - to the British Consulate-General in Hankow where it was made quite plain to him that his activities were undesirable. He protested that he was on a legitimate mission for a Shanghai business house and produced certain documents which indicated that he had been instructed to



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ascertain details in regard to the amount of timber, real estate, factories, shops, etc. etc. available for leasing. It was thought, however, that these documents were merely simple coded orders instructing him to ascertain certain important details relating to the strength and disposal of Chinese troops, armaments, anti-aircraft defences, etc. etc. The British Consul-General made it manifest to Prevot that he would tolerate no "beating about the bush" and advised him to leave Hankow at the first available opportunity. On June 28, when Prevot intended proceeding to Hongkong by air, he was detained by the Chinese authorities just prior to entering the south-bound plane. According to details received in Shanghai, the Hankow authorities had received further information which pointed to the absolute certainty of Prevot's espionage activities. He was handed over to the British Consul-General at the latter's request and is now being held under restraint in Hankow.

It is the intention of the Crown Advocate to prefer charges against Prevot under the China Orders-in-Council, but while the exact charge has yet to be framed, it is known that these orders do not provide for instances of espionage, as for example, in the present case. It is believed, however, that efforts will be made to secure a ruling ordering Prevot's deportation from China.

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Peter Henry Prevot, a British subject of French origin, was born at Victoria, Hongkong on February 1, 1894. His father was Pere Robert, well known local French catholic missionary of the late "nineties." Prevot's Shanghai address is Apartment No.1, sixth floor, St Anne's Building, 25-41 Rue du Consulat. Whilst it has yet to be confirmed, it is reported in certain circles that Prevot is working hand-in-glove with F.V. Wagner and Hilaire du Berrier, Americans who have already come to the notice of this office on account of their espionage activities.

*J. A. Pitts*  
D. S.

D.C. (Special Branch)

P. A. to D. C. (Sp. Br.)

## SHANGHAI RESIDENT ARRESTED

British Subject Accused  
Of Spying Activities  
In Hankow

### MR. PETER PREVOT NOW IN CONSUL'S CARE

HANKOW, July 12.—Mr. Peter H. Prevot, a British subject born in Hongkong, was detained by the Chinese authorities in Wuchang on June 28 while boarding a plane for Hongkong, it was revealed here to-day.

It is alleged that the Briton was detained for spying activities.

On hearing of the arrest, the British Consul-General in Hankow, Mr. C. E. Whitmore, requested that Mr. Prevot be handed over to him. This request was immediately complied with.

Mr. Prevot is remaining in Hankow pending elucidation of the situation.—Reuter.

Mr. Prevot is a well-known Shanghai resident, having been a member of the Shanghai Stock Exchange for a number of years. He has for long maintained his office at Ste. Anne Building, 25 Rue du Consulat, of which building he undertook the management on behalf of the French Mission owners.

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Evening Post.

July 12, 1938

**Briton In Wuchang  
Seized On Spying  
Charge By Chinese**

(Reuter's Agency)

HANKOW, July 12.—Mr. Peter Prevot, a British subject born in Hongkong, was detained by the Chinese authorities in Wuchang on June 28 while boarding a plane for Hongkong, it was revealed here today.

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On hearing of the arrest the British Consul-General in Hankow, Mr. C. E. Whitmore, requested that Mr. Prevot be handed over to him. This request was immediately complied with.

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DR

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## S.V.C.'s Position

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR,—I am surprised that no one took PREPARED to task for his letter to you in last Thursday's issue. Referring to the mill riots and the necessity for maintaining the S.V.C. in its present form he propounds the following:

If one small section of the industrial community can cause so much bother what would the position be if the trouble was general.

The answer is perfectly simple—not ten times the present strength of the S.V.C. would be sufficient to quell such a disturbance. By the way, was the rioting element entirely to blame? Why does PREPARED not enlighten your readers? He condemns force on one side and then calmly proceeds to allow it on the other!

He stands for the maintenance of the Corps as it is—i.e., as an extremely expensive military unit with trappings and paraphernalia that have nothing in common with the internal protection of the Settlement. Well and good. His opinion is entitled to consideration. But when he wilfully distorts the contents of the article on the S.V.C. by an anonymous contributor (in last Wednesday's issue), it were time indeed that it be pointed out to him that your readers, whatever their opinions, stand for fair play.

Times have changed and circumstances are not what they were. We one and all have the fullest admiration for the S.V.C. because of past services, but I feel certain that every reasonable man, in the Corps or out, does not wish to perpetuate a system which is entirely out-of-date and which is compelling expenditure that can be put to much better use. Sentiment should indeed have its place were there not other considerations of far greater importance. To appeal to national bias in order that a body of men of no military value should continue to exist is to employ the usual claptrap of those who prefer the rule of hatred and fear to that of international friendship and confidence. No attempt to make of this matter a political issue should be tolerated. There is already far too much of this playing at politics here and it bodes no good for this city's future.

Let us protect ourselves against mob violence (which could be avoided if we always and at all times had social justice) by all means. Let us have a Corps which is purely a volunteer affair for internal defence devoid of all unnecessary military "trimmings," and theatricals; commanded by volunteers and run on the lines of the Police Specials. To argue that a soldier is better than a policeman is so ridiculous as to be worth the mention in order that the argument be refuted. The difference lies not in the human element but in the laws under which each organization operates. Purely military affairs should be left in the hands of the sovereign states interested in Shanghai. It is their protection and their protection alone which guarantees the Settlement against any sudden and untoward changes.

P. H. PATVOT.

Shanghai, Nov. 24.

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SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

File No. *B.D. 7596*

S.2, Special Branch. *Section*

REPORT

Date November 6, 1936.

Subject Peter Henry PREVOT, British.

Made by D.S. Pitts

Forwarded by *Henry Pitts*

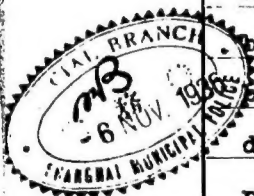
Peter Henry Prevot, a British subject of French origin, was born at Victoria, Hongkong on February 1, 1894. He is in possession of British Passport No.8417 issued in Shanghai on October 29, 1931.

He has resided in Shanghai for at least twenty years and is at present living at Apartment No.1, 6th Floor, St. Anne's Building, 25-41 Rue du Consulat. He also has an office on the fourth floor of the same building, where he conducts a stockbroker's business. In addition Prevot acts as resident engineer and custodian of these apartments, the proprietors being the French Catholic Fathers, for whom he manages several other local properties.

A bachelor and an excellent linguist, Prevot was formerly a member of the majority of the better class Shanghai clubs, but now retains membership in only a few of them. He has been a member of the Stock Exchange for several years and during the boom period in rubber was making as much as \$20,000 per month. When the slump set in, however, Prevot went down heavily, and coupled with the prevalent depression in the business world, has lost so much that he is now in comparative straitened circumstances.

Since April, 1936 many articles have appeared in the columns of the "North China Daily News" signed by Prevot. In each article or letter, Prevot's object was to bring before the ratepayers of the Settlement the absolute and urgent necessity of effecting economy in the conducting of the Municipal Council's affairs.

Enquiries have indicated that Mr. Prevot has been acting entirely independently and not on behalf of a group or clique.



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There can be no doubt that sympathy has been shown his project by members of all professions in Shanghai, and many other letters appearing in the press in the same vein as Prevot's articles only go to confirm this statement.

A clever and charming gentlemen, Mr. Prevot's private life will bear the strictest examination.

*Ja. Ditts*

*Completed for record.*

D. S.

*13.7.11*

Deputy Commissioner (Special Branch).

## Mr. Prevot Replies

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR,—It is surprising what can come from the pen of Mr. H. A. Reeks. That he, a ratepayer of the Settlement, a British Barrister, whose articles have so often appeared in various journals, should presume to impute to me accusations that I have never made and moreover declare as fact something of which he is entirely ignorant, is so unjust that those who have read all my correspondence and can therefore judge me fairly will resent. Apart from which I think his choice of language is somewhat unhappy.

He is intrigued to know for whom I speak. I am just as intrigued to know for whom he speaks. To charge me with rating the members of the S.M.C., with many of whom I am acquainted, as self-seekers, is ridiculous and I choose to ignore the charge. I respect each and every individual who sits on the Council. But I still see no reason for getting sentimental, like J.H.R. did, over their work. I do not believe they seek gratitude. Some may be on the Council because of their public spiritedness, others because they were nominated to represent definite local interests; but as a governing body I, at least, feel that they are not altogether as representative as they might be and from that springs the feeling that our Administration is a select coterie that panders only to certain interests. Right or wrong, this is what is being noised abroad and there can be no harm done in stating it openly. The S.M.C. cannot lay claim to perfection and as a public body its actions are open to criticism. But there has been no attempt in my letters at lowering its prestige nor its powers nor has any attack been delivered at the character of any individual or individuals.

If Mr. Reeks wishes to belittle any efforts I am making to secure for Shanghai what I consider a more representative government and a greater recognition of the rights of the small man, he is at liberty to do so. My person and my ideas or opinions are two very different things. It can hardly matter therefore whether I am a Hottentot or a Bushman. As it happens I do belong to one of the three nationalities that Mr. Reeks names. On that matter of fact therefore he is hopelessly wrong. I have my place of business in the International Settlement and indirectly contribute to its governance and upkeep. And as a citizen of this great city I will continue to maintain the right each of us possesses to freedom of speech.

When speaking of the S.M.C. it is not possible to treat the present one as a separate entity from any of those which preceded it. It is not a Being so much as a form of Government, with very definite policies arrived at after due deliberation. These policies may or may not suit the public. Individual Councillors may change yearly but the Council as a body "goes marching on." This point clearly understood—and anyone with an open mind cannot fail to understand—the cause for criticism of to-day's Council is more readily understood.

Whether the higher ranks in the Councils' employ are overpaid or not is a distinct matter of opinion. I still feel that they are because if it is found necessary to dismiss lowly paid employees and take away from them what is a bare living, those higher up are always in an infinitely better position to take a "cut." This doctrine is somewhat socialistic I admit but it is not for that reason inhuman. It is the whole motif of my correspondence present and past.

As to emoluments—In commercial life I have nothing to say, the matter being purely private in nature. Yet, it will be readily admitted that those in commercial undertakings have to accept risks which I do not think are present in a Municipal Service.

I will not enter into a controversy over whether an "orgy of spending" or "economy" is the better way in which to blast Shanghai out of the depression. Here again Mr. Reeks is

drawing a red herring across the trail and I do not propose to follow the scent, not liking herrings. Each of these schools of thought on economics has a distinguished following and none has so far been proved correct. Also the real wealth of Shanghai does not come from the presence of a few highly-paid foreigners but from the financial well-being of the masses—the small men.

Dealing more particularly with Shanghai's finances it is evident that the S.M.C. cannot maintain the present rate of expenditure as against income and for that reason it is incumbent upon it to reduce its expenses. (It would be interesting indeed to see such a reducing process being put into application through greater spending!) I have simply given my ideas as to where reductions may be effected and have done so quite frankly. In the process I was prepared to accept opposition but of the right order. I think opponents like J.H.R. and Mr. Reeks and others would gain by a lesser betrayal of impatience in their public utterances "Nincompoops," "self-seekers," "envious ones," "carping critics," "snipers," etc. are all names that do nothing more than condemn a weak defence and envenom a discussion which is after all academical.

I have admitted in my correspondence the excellent work done by the S.M.C. and have deprecated the raking up of the "mud" of the past. What has motivated all my criticism has always been clear—those on the lower rungs of the economic or social ladder should not be made to suffer at the expense of those higher up. I speak for no group or groups and have no contacts with any. That explains why my writings have much of the "personal" touch.

It is a great pity that in his concluding paragraph Mr. Reeks admits a tendency to violence of language and vulgarity. If the dignity of the S.M.C. might not be enhanced by the presence of Mr. Reeks (i.e. of course if Mr. Reeks refrains from being violent or vulgar) or myself on that body I for my part cannot see that it would necessarily be diminished. A man's value to a community lies not in his social or economical position but in what is within him and in his desire to serve each and every one without reference to race, creed, social or economical standing.

I shall always defend any personal charges against me but see no necessity for continuing a discussion in which I have made my stand quite clear. I would like to conclude on one note however—a plea for a better understanding between the various communities in this city. All is not well—at least that is what is generally felt. But cannot sectional misunderstandings be smoothed over to the advantages of all parties?

If asking for consideration to all concerned especially the small men if adherence to my right to criticize the actions of a public body; if pleading for International good-fellowship in an International Settlement is impertinence, then I must choose to remain impertinent.

P. H. PREVOT.

Shanghai, Nov. 3.



## Inquiry Supported

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR,—There is much to be said for your contributor's article in your issue of June 3, anent S.M.C. salaries etc. as he practically advocates what I did, a revision to meet changed conditions. Such revision can best be met by the establishment of a thoroughly independent Commission, composed of men unconnected in any way with the Council and not necessarily business men at that. And I stress the word independent.

Your contributor deprecates blind criticism and suggests that aspersions have been cast upon Municipal servants who cannot by the rules of the game retaliate. I deny that any aspersions whatever have been cast upon individuals holding municipal posts and challenge the writer to prove his statement. Why does he consider the critics any blinder than he? What quality or attribute does he possess which makes him see things Municipal in a clearer light than they? The S.M.C. despite its numerous promises still withholds from the public all its important doings. What does it pay a Press Liaison Officer for? The criticism in the Press has not been directed at individual efficiency but at the whole Municipal employment organization which very many of the public state quite openly has not moved with the times. What may be but peccadilloes in good times become intolerable faults in times such as we are passing through.

If we could only adjust our present outlook to what is in store for us instead of yearning for the return of the gold rush fever that affected Shanghai during, and for some number of years, after the Great War, ending somewhere round 1932, accepting with good grace the departure from the money-madness which possessed so many of us (including our City Fathers) into normalcy, I for one think that confidence would be more quickly restored to this city. And the S.M.C. should show the way by refusing to countenance the wastage of public funds that goes on

under the supposed plea of necessity. In the hey-day of things, when champagne flowed freely and quite stupidly in our night-haunts, the S.M.C. also threw discretion to the winds and created posts for which there was no call. The confidence of the public cannot but have been shaken however slightly by such goings-on and if the complaints directed against the Council in your columns have been somewhat coloured with extremist views the Council has only itself to blame. The "nepotism" connected with certain appointments even of recent date must be answered for.

I have had occasion lately to speak to several highly paid employees of the Council who freely admitted their agreement with the view that an all-round reduction in salaries and/or allowances (after careful examination of the case of each class of employee) would not be a hardship and would be quite in keeping with the situation as it is. They too could not see why the interests of only a few were sacrificed upon the altar of economy when those best able to face a "cut" were left severely alone. I accuse your contributor of being deliberately misleading for leaving this aspect of the question out of his article. In fact my criticism of the S.M.C. was based practically on this contention. I will not however suggest that he is unfair, preferring to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Neither he nor any of the public need worry as to the Municipal employee being unable to look after himself. Sleepless nights need not be our lot on that count. As a body, the Municipal employee can shout as lustily as any new-born babe where his interests are affected and if he has not to go through the press it is because he has directly the ear of the S.M.C. in whose maternal care he need not fear very much for the future. To suggest therefore that he is being unfairly attacked as your contributor appears to make out is farcical and deceives nobody.

P. H. PREVOT.

Shanghai, June 4.

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# MUNICIPAL SALARIES

## Effect of Depression

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR:—It is evident from ANGLO-LATIN's letter of the 27th inst. that there is an absence of bones in Shanghai. It is good to hear at the same time that the box-makers along Broadway are prospering. I was wondering why, when it occurred to me that the possible reason lay in the fact that they have probably been making boxes to hold the bones in, otherwise where could these bones have gone?

I hope that we can all admire, too, your correspondents' brand of economics which is quite in keeping with what is bringing on ruination to the world and to Shanghai. He seems to find it quite natural that the box-makers as a body succeed at the expense of some other commercial or trading body. It is like rejoicing at a dog which, beginning by swallowing its own tail, keeps the process up till there is nothing left to chew. May I request that he and others interested be good enough to read "Break-down" by Robert Briffault. He and they will see clearly why there is little hope for recovery until we recognize the axiom that the greatest good we can do to ourselves is to help others and not profit by their misery.

The best answer any enquirer can have to the question why there is such deep feeling in general against the Council's employment policy may be found on page 10 of your issue of the 28th under the title "Fire Brigade Staff Reductions." Each individual may have his own opinion as to whether Council pay (plus all the various allowances already detailed in correspondence) especially for the higher-ups, is excessive or not. That

is only the financial or narrow view. There is a much broader view to take of this whole question of economy and that is to my mind the one that derives from the social outlook. And if the ratepayers fight their battle on such a ground they must willy-nilly win out. Comparisons of commercial salaries with the Municipal, or of S.M.C. emoluments with those of the London County Council are, as I said, not always fair, as considerations of country, service, experience, etc. come into play which would prolong argument to a practically negative result. But no contention however brilliant can possibly justify the visiting of the "small" man with the terrible social disease of unemployment when others who get \$3,000 to \$3,500 a month are not even asked to contribute their share. This is the sort of thing that makes for revolutions. ANGLO-LATIN calls them "explosions." But some will say (referring to any one of the higher-ups in the Council's employ) "A man of his intellect and experience should get \$3,000 to \$3,500 a month (plus allowances!)" I will retort that there are without doubt thousands of men of far greater intellect and experience who are to-day glad to get the gift of a daily crust of bread and a cup of coffee, let alone all the luxuries that go with the salaries above-mentioned. So you see that the argument cannot hold. If the Council wishes to put my statement to the test it can easily do so by advertising for men of the "intellect and experience" required at lower salaries than those at present paid and see the result. The way some have of comparing \$16 to £1 or G.45 in the matter of salaries is utter nonsense and deceives nobody, as \$16 locally, standard for standard of necessary living expenses, purchase much more than £1 in England or G.45 in the U.S.A.

I could go on with argument after argument on this subject but it is not only with one's hand on one's purse that the matter must be treated. Living expenses, rents, clothing, etc. have come down here and everywhere. Non-necessaries are left out of more budgets. However, lower prices are absolutely necessary all round if we are to successfully combat the stranglehold finance has on us to-day. Interest rates in most countries have been drastically reduced. Municipal Income here is coming down in conjunction with the lowering of rents and the numerous vacancies that are occurring in nearly all landed estates. Is it fair or unfair that the Municipal employee should refrain from doing his part? When commercial salaries were high here, he raised an outcry to have his own emolument "brought up to scratch." Does he think it really unjust that with the all-round reductions that have taken place he should be asked by the public, whose servant he is, to do his little bit?

The fact that 153 unnecessary employees were carried on the books of the Fire Department is rather an indication of something being drastically wrong with the way employments have been doled out in the S.M.C. There is also the little matter of the totally unnecessary posts which are still being upheld at extremely high cost to the ratepayer without benefit whatever to the City. I will not mention them again to avoid appearing personal, but they are known to all and sundry. My views on the value for cost of the S.V.C. are public property. Social Services lack funds.

P. H. FAVOR.

Shanghai, May 30.

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S. V. C.

### Value of Figures

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

Sir,—I certainly cannot agree with Mr. BRUCE LOCKHART's contention that "an informed and intelligent public opinion can scarcely be expected to emerge from a maze of public discussion etc." He is referring to the discussion about the S.V.C.

I am afraid that Mr. Lockhart does not see the forest for the trees and knowing him as I do I can justly say that he is sadly bitten by what I shall call the "Statistics bug." If it is his intention of showing the public the rise in the costs of the Volunteer Corps, let him say so clearly, otherwise there is little point in the "maze" of figures which he trots out for our edification. We all know those figures have appeared in the Municipal Reports. It is difficult enough to hold public interest in matters of the present—wherefore this raking up of the past. Whatever was spent between 1929 and 1935—for that matter, between 1941 and 1935—is gone and paid for and mourning over the passage will do us no good. Taking as example the practically white elephant the Central Administrative Building represents, it would be easy to go on prattling over the past sins of the S.M.C. But would such a course serve any immediate purpose?

An object may be costly at half a million in this year of grace and cheap at twice the figure the year before, or vice-versa. That is a matter of circumstance. Where an expenditure of \$10,000,000 would be sanctioned gladly on the grounds of necessity, a demand for \$10 would be vetoed for a contrary cause. Mr. BRUCE LOCKHART is confounding costs with value and though your readers may have reason to thank him for his self-imposed task (which was not as difficult as you try to make out Bruce, was it now?) I really do not see that he has materially helped in moulding public opinion. The last published cost of the S.V.C. is \$720,000. I have argued that—and so far I have not seen any refutation of the points I raised—the sum represents what will be in value a complete waste if maintained. I may be wrong but I know from what I have heard and what has been addressed to me that my views have excellent support. Opinion has been stirred far more than Mr. LOCKHART seems to think. He must remember that most people are thoroughly diffident about "coming out into the open" with their ideas. I know from experience how heavy at times the punishment can be—and how unjust—and I can therefore well understand such an attitude.

P. H. PREVOT.

Shanghai, May 25.

Feb 26 1936

## VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

## Mr. P. H. Prevot Replies

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR,—Mr. Cohen has not quite got out of the maze in which he has involved himself by employing the somewhat insulting term "slacker." A "Volunteer" Corps is one which relies or should rely for its membership upon parties who are understood to have used their own free-will. Why therefore does he have to cast a slur upon the character of any individual, young or old, who chooses to exercise that selfsame free-will according to his particular concepts. By all means recruit if you can, Mr. Cohen, but it is not for you (or anybody) to insult in such a personal way!

And if the S.V.C. is a "volunteer" unit, wherefore the very goodly proportion of paid officers and men?

OLD SHANGHAI RESIDENT asks me to "think of my life." This injection of the element of fear moves some people but I am afraid it has little effect on me. I have thought of my life and the lives of my friends and the thousands around me and I still remain unshaken in my original conviction. But why does he say "We must have both the Police and Volunteer Service, etc."? I am all in favour of the Police, so he cannot have read me correctly. I still contend that the S.V.C. would be every bit as useful turned into a properly drilled Police Unit. From the point of view of economy let me call his attention, and that of those interested, to the following figures of comparison. The force of 520 Specials costs the City about \$30,000 annually as against \$720,000 paid on account of four times that number of Volunteers. In simpler terms, at an expenditure of say \$360,000 the Council could get 6,000 Police. And Police work is constant—Volunteer work eventual and consequently spasmodic.

Might I make one request to my critics; I think they might at least offer reasons for their statements. It would help their cause a lot more.

P. H. PREVOT.

Shanghai, May 16.

\*\*\*Mr. Prevot is exceeding the bounds of fairplay. Mr. COHEN has a perfect right to describe as "slackers" able-bodied men who are eligible for recruitment, have leisure at their disposal and do not join the Volunteers. Only those who fit the cap need get out of breath or angry with Mr. COHEN.



## MUNICIPAL MATTERS

### Economy Urged

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR,—I do not intend that the discussions I have raised by a free expression of my views in these columns degenerate into a cheap free-for-all where personal abuse under the guise of public-spiritedness is used as an offensive or defensive weapon.

That is why I am answering your leaderette of this morning. Mr. H. H. Cohen was perfectly justified in calling for greater recruitment in the S.V.C.—since he believes in its usefulness—and of criticizing my contrary belief. But in the use of the term "slacker" he was unfortunately personal and he got what he deserved. And he will get more if he persists in that sort of game. So will anybody, whatever his position in this city, who emulates him. I am discussing the Public Services and their usefulness in relation to cost, not the personal foibles of any individual or individuals.

Now I shall reply to your own comments. May I ask you to accept what I say in the same good spirit as I accept your criticism. Your leaderettes are very weak. Your counter attacks are mere thrusts unbacked by any good reasoning. You omit to take into consideration the matter of change of circumstances when dealing either with Municipal Salaries or the S.V.C. The human touch is completely lacking in your articles and I for one have the impression, rightly or wrongly, that editorial broadmindedness is absent. You say that I "garbled" the purport of your leader on Municipal Salaries. I confess that in many many cases I am compelled in my mind to deal likewise with a number of your editorials. You must pardon my ignorance, but more directness of expression and less jugglery of words and phrases, however well-sounding, would please quite a number of your more assiduous readers.

I respect and welcome every opinion you or your correspondents emit which are intended to contradict my own. But so far let me say that, apart from sentimentality, little if any reasoning has been adduced to strengthen such opinions. Again I must plead ignorance or just plain stupidity.

In the matter of Municipal Salaries the position is clear. By far the greater number of Shanghailanders, foreign and Chinese, have found their incomes and their standards of living dangerously reduced. Municipal economy is a crying need, yet nothing is done in respect of Municipal Servants excepting the scandalous throwing out of employment of a few unfortunate. I rebel at the callousness

of the whole business and so do thousands of others. By all means let the Council respect contractual engagements; nothing however can prevent a fair compromise being offered to office-holders. Recalcitrants can easily be dealt with at a later date.

As regards the higher-paid posts, there is not one of them which would but be gladly renounced by the present incumbent at a much more moderate salary. This is not a matter of taking advantage of bad times. It is a matter of sound finance and social fairness. Replacements would not be a difficult affair. Created posts should be abolished.

If the Commission I suggested, and which you approved of, be appointed I trust that it will consist of men known for their thoroughly independent views and social-mindedness. As for the S.V.C., I purposely left myself open to correction. From perusal of your columns no one appears to know exactly what its functions are or are destined to be. To me nevertheless they seem quite clear. Again I am wrong no doubt.

My point is that the Corps as a unit has done its work. Its military character adds in no way to its efficiency. Economy is needed and if disbanding is out of the question reducing it to a Police Special Reserve, drilled and disciplined, would in no way impair its standing or real utility. A military force can only be used after proclamation of martial law and I dare to doubt if the S.M.C. as a non-sovereign body has a right to make such a declaration.

All said and done the Ratepayers as a body will be the ones to shape future policies—not the S.M.C. Will they become articulate openly or will they be satisfied to continue in the same old way? The S.M.C. has by no means been all black. It has done magnificent work in the past and is well worthy of every possible praise in that direction. If it has blundered that is only human. But if it refuses to move with the times, then blundering can no longer be condoned and it must be called to order by those who hold the real power.

P. H. PREVOT.

Shanghai, May 14.

...The Shanghai Municipal Council is the elected representative body of the Ratepayers so Mr. Prevot and this journal are in complete agreement on the point.

## Volunteer Staff

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR,—Referring to the correspondence and comments on the S.V.C. may I, as a resident, and incidentally a taxpayer, suggest a really definite move in the direction of economy for the careful consideration of the S.M.C.

The S.V.C. must be maintained, but is it ever likely to be called upon to the extent it was, from say 1924-1927, during which period it warranted the expenditure?

During these strenuous times, the official headquarters staff consisted of a Colonel and two Sergeant Majors (instructors). Now Sir, does the present or possible future duties of the Corps warrant the retention of a Colonel, Brigade Major, Adviser, Staff Officer and Battalion Adjutant, together with two Sergeant Majors (instructors)?

Ex-SERVICE.

Shanghai, May 12.

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## MUNICIPAL SALARIES

### Mr. Prevot's Views

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR.—The Leader on "Municipal Salaries" in this morning's issue of your esteemed paper savours more of an apologia than a convincing defence of the matter treated. So far as I am concerned it does not really matter whether Mr. Higher-up in the Council is paid \$40,000 or \$100,000 a year, or whether or not his job has resulted from what some critics term nepotism. So long as the Ratepayers found the system satisfactory and voted the expense and nobody was hurt in the process, there was little to seriously growl about.

But the first growl happens to come from the Council itself. It recognizes the need for contraction of expenditure to meet the ever-lessening income and decides to embark upon a scheme of retrenchment. True to tradition the "little man" is being made to take the whole brunt of all this. He needs every cent he receives in order to so much as exist, but in spite of this, he is being thrown out in large numbers and left to fend for himself in a city where unemployment is rife. With nothing put aside (he has had no time) and nothing to look forward to, his position is indeed a desperate one. Yet are there men in the Council's employ living, as I say, on the very fat of the land or occupying "soft" or "created" jobs—positions that I repeat, can quite easily be dispensed with without in any way interfering with the good work of administration. Why have these men not been asked to make the first sacrifice? They are best able to meet the change.

That is the whole point of my criticism. When into the bargain comes the matter of poverty of social service then the whole position becomes infinitely worse. And yet the Chairman speaks glibly of an increase in the Rates. If he gets his hope fulfilled, little hope is there left for Shanghai's future.

Whilst on the subject, may I point out that your comparison of the local rates and taxes with those paid by Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and most American cities, is quite unjustified, as the conditions obtaining in each case are different. You cannot have allowed sufficiently for the differences in the economic scale. That my very great-grandparent gnawed raw meat off the bone and donned only sheep or bearskin hardly justifies my doing the same to-day. Of course I would delight the ladies—those keen worshippers of cave-man stuff—but I should be immediately ostracised by the male or weaker sex and relegated to the ranks of the cannibal and probably shot on sight. What therefore may be good for Birmingham, etc. etc. need not be, indeed is not, good for Shanghai.

In the matter of overpayment of salary has it occurred to you that

(1) \$30,000 is the equivalent of about £2,000 but the real or purchasing value of the money in Shanghai is nearer £4,000. In Slocum-on-Marsh I should venture to say that salary would be a very moderate one!!!

(2) Payment of an over high salary in order to assure integrity of the incumbent is a serious reflection on the moral character of said incumbent? What a commentary on our materialistic civilization!

I do not suppose that much change will happen immediately from all these writings and discussions. The game of patting each other's backs by those who hold the reins of power will probably go on. Sincere and justified criticism will continue to be received with offence or disdain. And all the time the lowly-placed will have to find happiness in being crushed out of existence. But the day of reckoning cannot be very far off. The exploitation of the many for the sake of the very few must have its repercussion. When the boomerang strikes, the force of the rebound will

be even greater than that of the delivery.

Finally, does the new Council dare to appoint immediately a totally independent and fair Commission to examine into the above charges? There are plenty of honest and capable men who could carry out the work to everybody's satisfaction—men who have no particular cronies to favour, no axes to grind and no false god to worship. Really independent souls I mean.

P. H. PREVOT.

Shanghai, May 8.

\*\*\*In regard to Mr. Prevot's two questions it may be stated

- (1) The Council's scales of salary are according to the market rates fixed by experience and due regard to the qualifications required and tested by the usual methods of comparison.
- (2) It is a fact that the prescription of a scale of salary which ensures to the recipient a modest competence is the best safeguard against corruption.

For the rest Mr. Prevot does not seem to have read the leading article with the care which would have enabled a man of his intelligence to avoid so palpable a garbling of its purport.

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## Obstacles to be Met

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS"

SIR.—It makes one feel good to see a member of the Church so openly attacking the sores that plague this God-ridden and hypocritical city of ours. The Rev. Michael Bruce's sermon is not a novel departure for amongst us have we men like the Rev. Witherspoon and Luccock (and at times the Rev. Newsham) who speak to us in plain unvarnished phrases to tell us our duty to one another whatever our condition or circumstance.

But does it not seem a bit odd that Shanghai has suddenly awakened to the presence of terrible social injustices in our midst? I personally have known of them for the last twenty years and touched upon them in various "letters to the papers." Or is it that a certain light has just dawned giving courage to sally forth and deliver battle to the enemy?

It is by no means too late to commence. But having started on what will be a very wearing road I hope nothing will daunt reformers, not even the frowns of disapproval from the little tin-gods who supposedly or in fact rule us. It will be a pity indeed if so much good-will both clerical and lay, fails to accomplish the task.

But to succeed—though I hate to say it—there must be funds, funds supplied by the public of Shanghai. Without official aid either from the Chinese Government or a rather

Godless Municipality, the task is hopeless, I am afraid. My concern here is not with the former but with the latter. First, the Shanghai Municipal Council must learn that the money it wastes annually can be put to much better use. To be constructive it must first be explained how the wastage occurs viz: in the payment of ridiculously high salaries to the clique of higher-ups; in the creation of much too ornate public buildings and the poor usage to which high-priced land is put; in the upkeep of a Volunteer Corps which is an anachronism. The dismissal of 153 men foreign and Chinese from the Fire Brigade is a crying scandal, when the higher-ups and others have not even been asked to make any sacrifice. The employment in soft jobs of a number of Regular Officers and Warrant officers who have been seconded (that is who possess other jobs) is totally unwarranted and that the whole game of amateur sabre-rattling is completely out-moded. That there is no call for a Rickshaw Board nor real necessity for a Directorate-General.

It is not right to inveigh against the vested interests. As the world is constituted to-day vested interests must and will continue to have the upper hand. In fact they do make for balance which others lack. The economic system as a system is at fault but its representatives are not always the rascallions they are painted. Amongst the newly constituted Shanghai Municipal Council is new and young blood quite capable of striking out along an independent path and whose good-will you can and will surely win.

Keen opposition however will come from the die-hard and the perhaps-not (a cross between a camel and an ostrich). But their day thank God is passing. Soon they shall join their fathers in the land of the dodo.

I write in the humblest spirit devoid of any cynicism or presumption. Had circumstances been more favourable I would have made greater clamour locally. As it is I remain satisfied to follow where Mr. Bruce or others lead. And may the Churches (those holdreds of conservatism) whatever their denomination enter more into the task of seeing that social justice is done here in Shanghai and elsewhere. This is the sincere prayer of

P. H. PREVOT.

Shanghai, May 5.

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